



**File Code:** 3400; 5150  
**Date:** August 14, 2017

Dear Neighbor,

The Boulder District is seeking public comments on the proposed Buttonrock Collaborative Project in Boulder County. This proposed project includes vegetation management activities including manual thinning, hand piling, and prescribed pile burning on approximately 350 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands adjacent to private property and lands managed by Boulder County Parks and Open Space and the City of Longmont. The project planning team is currently considering possible treatments and developing project design criteria based upon on-going field and survey work in the area. Their findings will be reported in an environmental document and will take into account input from the public. A map and details of the project are attached for your review.

Boulder County Parks and Open Space, the City of Longmont, Colorado State Forest Service, and the USDA Forest Service (referred to as the Collaborative Partnership) have identified this area as a high priority to reduce fuel loadings to minimize the negative effects of a high intensity wildfire on surrounding watersheds that provide drinking water to the City of Longmont.

Proposed management activities include thinning mixed conifer stands dominated with ponderosa pine and a mixture of Douglas-fir and Rocky Mountain juniper. Slash created by these treatments would be hand piled and burned and/or lopped and scattered if there is not enough material to construct a hand pile.

In addition to fuel reduction, this project would contribute to the restoration of a healthy, diverse, and fire resilient forest structure across the landscape. It would restore ponderosa pine/mixed conifer stands and meadows/shrublands toward their characteristic species composition, structure, and spatial patterns in order to increase resistance and resiliency to future natural disturbance.

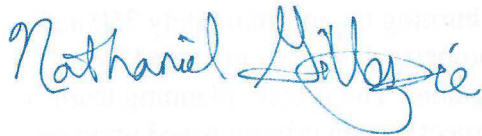
The project planning team is currently considering possible treatments and developing project design criteria based upon on-going field and survey work in the area. Their findings will be reported in an environmental document and will take into account input from the public. A map and details of the project are attached for your review.

My preliminary assessment is that the scope of this work falls within a Categorical Exclusion (CE), and therefore neither an Environmental Assessment, nor an Environmental Impact Statement is required. Specifically, we would be using Categorical Exclusion 6: Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities that does not involve use of herbicides or do not require more than 1 mile of road construction. 36 CFR 220.6(e)(6). If the CE is used, my decision on this project is not subject to objection.



For additional information and to submit your comments, contact Kevin Zimlinghaus, USFS, at 2140 Yarmouth Ave; Boulder, CO 80301; 303-678-5691; or send your comments by email to: [comments-rocky-mountain-arapaho-roosevelt-boulder@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-rocky-mountain-arapaho-roosevelt-boulder@fs.fed.us). Please respond no later than September 13, 2017.

Sincerely,



NATHANIEL GILLESPIE  
Acting Boulder District Ranger